

# THE DECEMBER 05 BULLETIN

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### SEABUNNIES

Well, we come to another close of season, time to rinse out the gear real good – but time to start planning your trips for next year!! Don't ignore Cozumel and our Keys next year. They were both battered by hurricanes this year, but good reports are coming in! Cozumel's shallow reefs were hurt, but the deep reefs and walls are fine. More and more hotels are repaired and opening as we speak. Our Keys are always resilient! Business is bouncing back! These are outstanding dive vacation locations, so keep those plans!

Our Seabunnies have been diving and always having fun. Deb Holtz just got back from a West Palm Beach trip with Mac's Sports in September. West Palm is great drift diving and good wrecks. Rita continued to dive the east coast from Pompano down to the Keys, and threw in one shore dive in Venice too (found one shark tooth!) Patti B and hubby Lowell spent a month in Key West, which was incredible! They visited Seabunnie Camille (a four year "Conch" now) who says "Howdy" to all of her Seabunnie buddies. Patti caught mahi-mahi, lobsters, snapper, grouper, and found 9 bronze "pins", which according to the lady at Mel Fischer's place, are probably from 400 year old wreckage. In their store, they have them priced at \$120 each! They're rich!!! Connie P and a few other folks came down for post hurricane activities.

Mary T was home-bound due to illness, but her dive buddies reported local waters are producing keeper gag grouper, even though the reefs don't look very healthy and the viz was not good. Her buddy dove the Middle Grounds recently and reports great viz, 77 degree water, and an awesome assortment of big fish. Porpoises frolicked with the divers. Hefty AJs, big Gag Grouper, and grouper sized Snapper were abundant. If you can get to the Middle Grounds, now is the time to go if the seas are calm.

A few weeks ago Lynn Jones showed up the guys and gave them a run for their money by bringing up a stringer of big fish on the first dive. Way to go Lynn! She went south out of John's Pass and dove at about 55 -90 feet. The conditions were same as reported by everybody else lately -- not pretty. The visibility was bad and she didn't see anything alive except some snapper, a good amount of black grouper (no reds which usually hang on the bottom) and a few hogfish. She didn't see any bait fish, no small bottom fish, no grass, no shells, starfish, etc. There was a sludge-like layer over the ledges. She doesn't think photographers will get any good shots anytime soon, but there were some fish to shoot. It was rather eerie.

In lieu of diving in red tide, on September 18th, Holly and 11 Bunnies--Lisa B, Adrienne, Betsy, Brynn, Lynn, Peggy L., Claire, Gale, Lisa T., Betty, along with Connie Parkinson and friends up for a pool party, burgers and dogs, as well as some kayaking for some. Lots of yummy food and a beautiful moon through Ron's telescope made the evening very relaxing, fun and ful-FILLING.

Then the following day, prospective Seabunnie, Karen joined Lisa B in the Shell Pit in Arcadia for a fossil dig with Rowdies Sonia and Lori Smith, along with Lisa's 6-1/2 year old son Trevor. He was thrilled to have found a Megladon tooth and had an even better time with his adventures in the mud, water, and dirt. It didn't take him two minutes to fall asleep in the car on the way home. Mark Renz, who runs these fossil expeditions, is not sure how long the Pit will be open. It may have something to do with state regulations that were not being followed. Stay tuned. Mark spoke at our September 21st meeting and showed a presentation on the extinct Megladon Shark.

A Seabunnie tradition – “The Fifth Wednesday” -- November 30th was our night out at Poblano's Mexican Restaurant on McMullen Booth Road. About 16 Seabunnies, friends and families came for Happy Hour and Dinner. Poblano's is authentic Mexican cuisine - if you haven't discovered it yet, give it a try! Thanks to Deb H for putting this altogether!

Adrienne hosted a wonderful Casinoween Party in October. There were Geeks, Greeks, and Goddesses there and lots of fun, gambling, singing...okay and some cheatin' was had, not to mention a wonderful buffet of delicious food! You can tell Dave and Adrienne have worked hard on their oasis of their tiki hut, outdoor kitchen (wow) and beautiful plumaria/frangipanni flowers!

While the weather was behaving, about 30 Seabunnies and friends and families gathered on November 5<sup>th</sup> for the annual Poker Run Bike and Blade on the Pinellas Trail. We all gathered first at Paula T's house for delectable Belgium waffles and goodies. Then on down to Eileen's for champagne and a tour of her fabulous new kitchen (which should be featured on HGTV – we're so envious!!). We did skate and bike a bit on over to Betty's for some more goodies, and we learned how to grow orchids! We then had to stop at a park to pick up our fourth card for our poker hand, then on to Adrienne's for homemade Sangria! Yes – we did get in some exercise (in between eating and drinking) and everyone had a wonderful time! Thanks to all our Hostesses!!

Our Seabunnies always need pampering, so on November 19<sup>th</sup>, Tara and Gale coordinated Spa Day at Eileen's home. The ladies indulged themselves with manicures, pedicures and massages. Looking good girls!!

Lisa B and hubby Scott threw their Christmas Party December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Great music, delicious food, festive spirits made for a lovely evening. And it was a joy to see our Conch buddy Camille! She came up from Key West to visit with everyone. It was great laughing about the ol' days!

Many of our Seabunnies are participating in good causes. Lisa S spent two weeks in Chulucanas, Peru working surgery for a medical mission trip. She then flew back to Lima and met Mary B so they could continue on to Sacred Valley, Cuzco and Machu Piichu, for four days then fly back to Lima, on to Iquitos {gateway to jungle}. There are no roads there, travel is only by air or boat. They got on a speed boat to go 50 miles up the Amazon and another 40 miles up the Tahuayo River to their jungle lodge for 8 days in the jungle. Look up Global Health Ministry and <http://perujungle.com/> for information. Very interesting!

Seabunnies Patti B, Connie P and Lisa S and others are "Garden Fairies," a group that started six years ago through a mutual love of gardening. The fairies propagate the belief that the world is a better place with tropical colors and lush gardens. The group is committed to the community and has helped spruce up homes and parks in the area. In December the group will be spreading holiday cheer at a foster home for teenage girls. Keep up the good work!

Continuing with the community spirit, the Seabunnies will once again have our Annual Cookie Swap at Betty's this month. We bring lots of cookies, taste them all, and in traditional Seabunnie competition fashion, award prizes for "best looking" and "best tasting" cookies. We each bring a gift for a needy child. Betty then takes the truckloads of donated gifts to the Salvation Army for distribution. They always welcome her and are thankful for our generosity.

Future events are planned! On December 17<sup>th</sup> --Possible Manatee Dive, Plantation Inn? We might do a Kayaking/Canoe trip... More ideas?? Also, we need people to run the club next year too! We're trying to talk Lisa B into staying as President, but hubby Scott has other ideas! So we need your help ladies!! Step on up!!

Speaking of elections – our own Sandie Curran is running for the Florida House of Representatives District 52. She hopes her run for Tallahassee can make a big difference in our community! Look for her on the ballot!

As always – here's our tally-to-date for the Bunnie Board. Remember, competition closes December 31<sup>st</sup> – if you have anything to add – let Mary T know now!

#### **FISH / LOBSTER**

##### **GROUPER**

Lisa Tatro	6.1 lbs
Lynn Jones	10.2 lbs
Mary Taylor	50 lbs

##### **HOGFISH**

Lisa Tatro	5 lbs
Mary Taylor	10 lbs

##### **SNAPPER**

Lisa Tatro	4.5 lbs
Mary Taylor	6 lbs

##### **SHEEPSHEAD / TRIGGERFISH/ FLOUNDER**

Lisa Tatro (Trigger Fish)	2 lbs
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## **AMBERJACK / BARRACUDA / COBIA**

Mary Taylor AJ 18 lbs

## **LOBSTER**

Lisa Tatro 1.5 lb.

Mary Taylor 4.75 lbs

## **SAVE OUR SEAS**

Lisa Tatro - Total points = 3

Mary Taylor - Total points = 4

Lisa Boing - Total points = 5

Rita Fitzpatrick - Total points = 14



## **SUNCOAST REEF ROWDIES**

It was Ruth Kisco's beautiful Hairy Triton that took "Best Shell" category of the competition November 1<sup>st</sup> this year. This critter was a casualty of the Red Tide out in the Gulf. It takes special care to preserve the hair on this shell. She is still looking for glycerin but the mineral oil is working. Very nice Ruth!

Fossil shells were the surprise collection that was chosen as "Best Shell Collection." This one was mine and even though I had suffered through the stinky shell cleaning of those I brought back from the Bahamas, I thought I had a more interesting collection of fossil shells. What a job pouring through all of my fossil books and Lori's books too, to find the Latin names, order and family - I even went out and bought a new book!

"Man Made Artifacts" were another display. Pat Friedette found a great large green glass bottle embellished with coral and barnacle growth that was chosen for first place. Pat found this in the Bahamas - good find Pat. We all could be making this a great category next year - I have to admit that I didn't enter the fish line and sinkers I found - much too common and not nearly as interesting as Pat's bottle.

And then there were the "Natural Artifacts." The entry that caught everyone's eye was the "put the puzzle together" bone I found. This bone turned out to be a radius/ulna that might have belonged to a horse or llama. I didn't know when I found this bunch of bones, actually 9 pieces, that they all fit together! Lori fit a couple of pieces together and after she left, I fiddled around and fit her two to the two I had put together and I started to get really excited, twisting and turning each piece until SURPRISE! I had scotch taped together a whole bone with just one hole left from a missing piece. Whew! Mark Renz, our fossil guide, looked at pictures I sent and advised me to go to the Florida Museum of Natural History to compare and identify the species. What fun!

As all of you know, the red tide this year has taken a huge toll on the spearfishing. Ruth and Steve have kept us abreast of the situation but have been able to shoot some good ones. So, first place for largest grouper (18#1oz) and hogfish (5#4oz) goes to Ruth Kisco. No other categories were entered.

The finals will be announced at our December Awards and Holiday Banquet 12/03/05 at the Wine Cellar in Clearwater. Photography is the large category to be revealed for the greatly anticipated

grand finale. Most of the Rowdies are great active photographers, so the competition is close. And, of course, the awards are based on total points. Good luck to each Rowdie contestant! Many thanks go to the photo judges, Sally and Giovanni Recchia. They are very knowledgeable and we appreciate the time they spent making those very hard decisions.

Adding the new photo contest categories of digital to everything made for some difficulties in the judging. There has always been difficulty in comparing slides vs. prints in the past. I'm sure we need to have a meeting just for studying the effects of the changes - sounds like a good topic for a speaker!

We have one very special award to present at our Awards ceremony and that is in appreciation of one of our members who has made many contributions to the success of our club. We think that person is going to be surprised - sort of fibbed to them about who we selected and had them vote for someone else! ☺ Tune in for the next article to find out WHO it is!!

Rowdies have been successful in having special programs every month this past year and October was one of our best. Jitka Hyniova, a Tampa underwater movie stunt cave diver presented a "behind the scenes" slide show of "The Cave" movie. She is a very good speaker and her slides were fascinating. If you are interested, go to [www.sonypictures.com/movies/thecave](http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/thecave). You may know one of the photographers who worked on this movie, Wes Skiles, who is famous for his underwater filmmaking. I was interested to see the scenes shot in Dos O'jos, an absolutely gorgeous cave in Mexico, that Ken and I have been in. The Bunnies who joined us said they enjoyed her program - we thank you for coming!

Rowdies have special activities all year long, no matter the weather, so come join us. We may do some activities other than diving such as kayaking, swimming with the manatee, etc. but we do go even if it is only 3 - 4 people!! We are a mixed age's family group that have a great time together - give us a call!

Sea Ya - wet or not, Sonia



## SUNCOAST SEALS

The Seals give a hearty "Thanks" to Dan Addison for his hard work and leadership as President for the past two years. Bill Harshman will be taking the helm and will be kicking off a membership building campaign. The Sec/Treas responsibilities will be handled by Jeff Dupree. Better weather and red tide conditions would be a great help in recruiting new members.

We congratulate the "Team Spearboard" club for winning the 2005 WCC Tournament Series. The enthusiasm of this newly formed club is impressive. Clubs that find themselves in a decline would do well to look into the reasons for their success. Congratulations are also extended to Scott McPherson for winning the Norm Wyman/Pappa Taylor award.



SPUCS

### What's going on?

We got our five grouper back and no closed season in federal waters. Thanks to the Fishing Rights Alliance and Dennis O'hern. Dennis and the hard working lawyers at Piper Rudnick worked their butts off to get back our rights. Lots of bogus science was thrown at these boys and they countered it with cold hard facts. You know the actual truth. Way to go Dennis and the FRA.

### Norm Wyman/Poppa Taylor Award

Congratulations to Scott McPherson for winning the award this year. Scott is the founding father of Spearboard.com and has been a huge supporter of the FRA since the it was formed. All the SPUC'S are really proud of Scott.

### West Coast Council

Was won by Team Spearboard this year and took the crown away from the SPUC'S who have won it the last two years. Team Spearboard has been in the FSDA for only one year and has already made a strong showing. Dean Phillips of Team Spearboard also took home the first place overall champion of the year. Way to go Dean!

### Costa Rica & The Keys

Gary Sanchez and Sasa Bratic went down there for a few days and Gary got a monster 288 lb yellowfin tuna while Sasa shot some in the 150 lb class. Man thats a lot of sushi. Way to bring home the bacon Gary. While Ritchie Zacker, GR Tarr, Gerry Guerra Sr and Gerry Guerra Jr went down to the Keys and were on safari. They shot lots of wahoo up to 50 lbs, kingfish up to 25 lbs, amberjack up to 75 lbs and lots of other species. Ritchie got a real treat shooting and stoning a new world record black grouper that weighed 53.5 lbs. This is the third world record that he has shot this year. He also holds the world records for Spadefish-11.2 lbs and Sheepshead-13.3 lbs. The SPUC'S have been on a tear this year with world records. We're racking them up.



## TAMPA BAY SPEARFISHING CLUB

The Tampa Bay Spearfishing Club (TBSC) has had a strong year. This is the second year of the club and the first year that we joined the FSDA. We are now have over 50 paid members and we recently got our Club shirts ordered and delivered in the Fall of 2005. Keep and eye out and you may see them around town. The design is a skeleton riding a tiger shark under the Skyway Bridge. The Skeleton his holding his speargun and riding the bucking shark as Hogfish, Grouper, Barracuda and A.J.s surround him and the shark. A big thanks goes to Howie Scarboro for helping Bill Hardman and Issac Lathrop in finishing the -T-shirt ordeal.

**Our club spearfishing tournament is coming to a close on Dec. 31 and many members have turned in fish and lobster for weighing. Lee Araujo of Lee's Taxidermy donated a 30" Gag grouper for the permanent Spearfisherman of the year Plaque and we will add each years winner to the Trophy/Plaque.**

**We will have new officers voted in February 2006. The current Officers are: President, Issac Lathrop; Vice President, Bill Hardman; Secretary, Chris Grauer and Treasurer, John Morrison.**

**We hope to do more diving with other FSDA members in 2006 and we look forward to the WCC tournaments and other fun FSDA events.**

**Submitted By: Bill Hardman**